DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 156 280 JC 780 376

AUTHOR Fischer, Guerin A.
TITLE Marketing a Community College: A Conceptual Framework.
PUB DATE 10 Apr 78
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (58th, Atlanta, Georgia, April 9-12, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Attendance; Community Colleges; Enrollment; Guidance; Information Dissemination; *Junior Colleges; *Marketing; Open Enrollment; Organizational Communication; *Publicize; *School Holding Power; *Student Recruitment; Student School Relationship

ABSTRACT

The size of the educational enterprise clearly demonstrates that education is big business. In 1976, education involved 29% of the national population, cost approximately $131 billion, and accounted for 8% of the gross national product. Close attention should be given to the way in which those responsible for delivery of educational services interface with service consumers. There appears to be a tendency in community colleges to see a direct correlation between the length of a recruitment activity list and the success of projected enrollment increases. However, selling is only one of an aggregate of marketing functions and sales activity does not guarantee increased enrollments. The effectiveness of community college marketing efforts depends on understanding the process of extending meaningful educational experiences to a very heterogeneous population inquiring or applying to an open door college. The only possible outcome of recruitment activities is an increase in inquiries, in applications, and in individuals admitted to the college. Success of marketing must be measured in attendance, and can only be achieved if all student services are coordinated. Student retention begins with dissemination of accurate information about college programs and services and may involve counseling and/or advising applicants according to their abilities, interests, and needs. (TR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED156280

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Guerin A. Fischer

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

MARKETING A COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

A Conceptual Framework

Guerin A. Fischer

A paper presented at the

Annual Convention of the American Association

of Community and Junior Colleges

April 10, 1978

JC 780 376

MARKETING A COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When individuals associated with a community college hear the word "marketing" used, what may often come to mind is an image of a salesman beating the bushes to drum up more sales for a business concern. This image of "marketing" undoubtedly presents some problems in an academic community insofar as the activities associated with that image may be judged inappropriate for members of a community college. Unfortunately, the word "marketing" is probably heard most frequently at a community college when a desired level of enrollment has not been attained and community college personnel are either requested or told to plan recruitment activities. A lengthy list of recruitment activities may, in fact, be presented as the marketing plan for the institution, and some of the individuals involved in carrying out those activities may find it difficult to relate to the newly assigned tasks. Thus, the masses march out of the institution under the marketing umbrella to beat the bushes to drum up more students for a community college. The motivating factors involved in these activities may include such educational realities as the possibility of retrenchment or job loss and some parting words such as "marketing is everyone's responsibility."

There seems to be a tendency in community colleges to see a direct correlation between the length of a recruitment activity list and the success with which a projected increase in enrollment is achieved. Thus, it may seem logical to assume that expected enrollment projections will be realized once the recruitment effort is intensified and the individuals involved are made accountable for expected results. While recruitment activities should be planned

and carried out and the individuals involved be made accountable for their efforts, we should be very careful not to confuse recruitment outcomes with an expected increase in enrollment at a community college. By focusing on the roles played by both the salesman representing a business marketing organization and those of the people involved in community college recuitment activities, we may begin to understand the real meaning of marketing a community college.

It seems appropriate at this point to look at a general definition of marketing. Webster defines marketing as "the aggregate of functions in transferring title and in moving goods from the producer to consumer, including among others buying, selling, storing, transporting, standardizing, financing, risk bearing, and supplying market information." Webster's definition of marketing provides us with a very simple yet often overlooked concept that is at the heart of marketing in general and marketing a community college in particular. Marketing is an aggregate of functions of which selling is only one of those functions. This concept is critical to a community college, since the role played by the recruiter is at best one of promoting educational opportunities to residents of the community college service area.

Unlike the salesman who has control over the functions leading up to a sale, the community college recruiter is involved in activities which can only prompt college service area residents to inquire or apply to the college. If we accept Webster's general definition of marketing as the aggregate of functions in moving goods from the producer to the consumer, then we can safely say that the community college recruiter has no control over most functions that have to be individualized in order for the actual sale to occur or before a

prospective student enrolls into specific classes. Let's examine Figure I outlining the roles played by the salesman and the recruiter in the marketing process. Both the community college recruiter selling educational opportunities to a very heterogeneous population residing in the college service area, and the salesman selling a product or products, have a market which they have to know and understand. Both the community college recruiter and the salesman have to know the product or service they represent. Both representatives have to be able to communicate with their respective markets with the intent of selling individuals on the need to take advantage of the products or services available to them.

The salesman is a member of a sales organization which is often recognized as the most vital function of the marketing process. Sales organizations are often referred to as marketing organizations because the salesman are in fact the producers in the sense that the production line cannot move the products to the consumer before the sales are made. The salesmen or members of a marketing organization also have to be able to assess the specific needs of customers and bring sales to closure by writing orders, often receiving payment, partial payment, or making arrangements for credit before communicating with the plant or warehouse about delivery. In effect, the ability of the salesman to sell the customer on the need to purchase a certain product, determines the extent to which production plants produce.

The community college recruiter is normally a member of the admissions staff which performs only one of several functions associated with student services or student affairs. While we may argue

that admissions personnel are not the only individuals responsible for recruitment activities, the job of coordinating those activities at a community college is most closely related to the responsibilities, background, and experience of the Director of Admissions. In any event, if we take a long hard look at the aggregate of functions required to achieve student attendance at a community college, we should recognize that our ability to market or extend educational opportunities to a greater number of college service area residents depends to a large extent on internal or on-campus functions in general, and student services in particular. Assessing specific needs of the prospective students and advising prospective students into the most appropriate courses or educational experiences for any given semester or term, registration, and the handling of fee payment, are in the hands of individuals who often define their own goals, workload, and availability, none of which is under the control of the recruiter or individuals involved in recruitment activities.

Unlike the business marketing organization which is considered vital to a business concern, the functions performed by student services are often viewed as non-producing or non-contributing to the total college effort. The successful salesman knows the product or products, knows the market and is able to identify new markets within a territory, maximizes the effects of advertising, and is able to disseminate accurate information about the product, products, or services, is able to assess the specific needs of a customer, and is able to bring a sale to closure by writing an order which represents a request for delivery of goods or services which are in keeping with those needs, is often able to collect partial or full

payment or make arrangements for credit, and is always prepared to follow up on the status of delivery. The salesman performs many functions in the field, and has full control over activities which bring a sale to closure. The community college recruiter and other community college personnel involved in recruitment activities often lack the knowledge of programs and services offered by the community college, are not as familiar as they should be with the market or the needs of potential students, and are often not in a position to disseminate accurate information relative to college attendance. Nevertheless, the existence of the community college in close proximity to residents of several communities prompts individuals to inquire or apply to the college. Every inquiry and application received by the college represents a potential student. The marketing process at a community college is not completed until individuals register, pay fees, and attend classes. Unlike the salesman who has control over the activities leading up to selling a customer on the need to buy a certain product or products, class attendance depends on a number of internal college functions. How inquiries are handled - be they phone, walk-in, or mail - the handling of applications, the availability of staff to discuss general and specific educational needs with prospective students at the time application, the scheduling of registration and fee payment, and the availability of financial aid may singularly or collectively have a bearing on whether or not an inquirer or an applicant becomes a student. Student status must be achieved before we in a community college can say that the marketing process is completed and delivery or instruction can take place.

It should seem obvious that instruction is dependent upon the effectiveness of a coordinated delivery of services which must be extended through what is normally referred to as student services or student affairs. The fact of the matter is that student affairs, in the context of our discussion, represents the marketing organization of a community college.

The effectiveness of a community college marketing effort depends to a large extent on understanding the process involved in extending the most meaningful educational experiences to a very heterogeneous population inquiring or applying to an open door community college. We must recognize that the only possible outcome of recruitment activities are an increase in inquiries to the college, an increase of applications to the college, and an increase of individuals admitted to the college. There are several links in the chain of events which must take place before an inquirer or an applicant becomes a student, that is, before we have increased enrollment. Success of marketing a community college, which is measured by attendance, can only be achieved if all student services are coordinated and clearly understand their roles and contributions to the marketing process. I suggest that student retention begins with the dissemination of accurate information about the college, its programs, and services, and may ultimately depend upon counseling and/or advising applicants in courses and programs which are in keeping with their abilities, interests, and needs.

Marketing is a process which is applicable to a community college inasmuch as its applicability is based on our commitment to meet the educational needs of the individuals we are committed to serve.

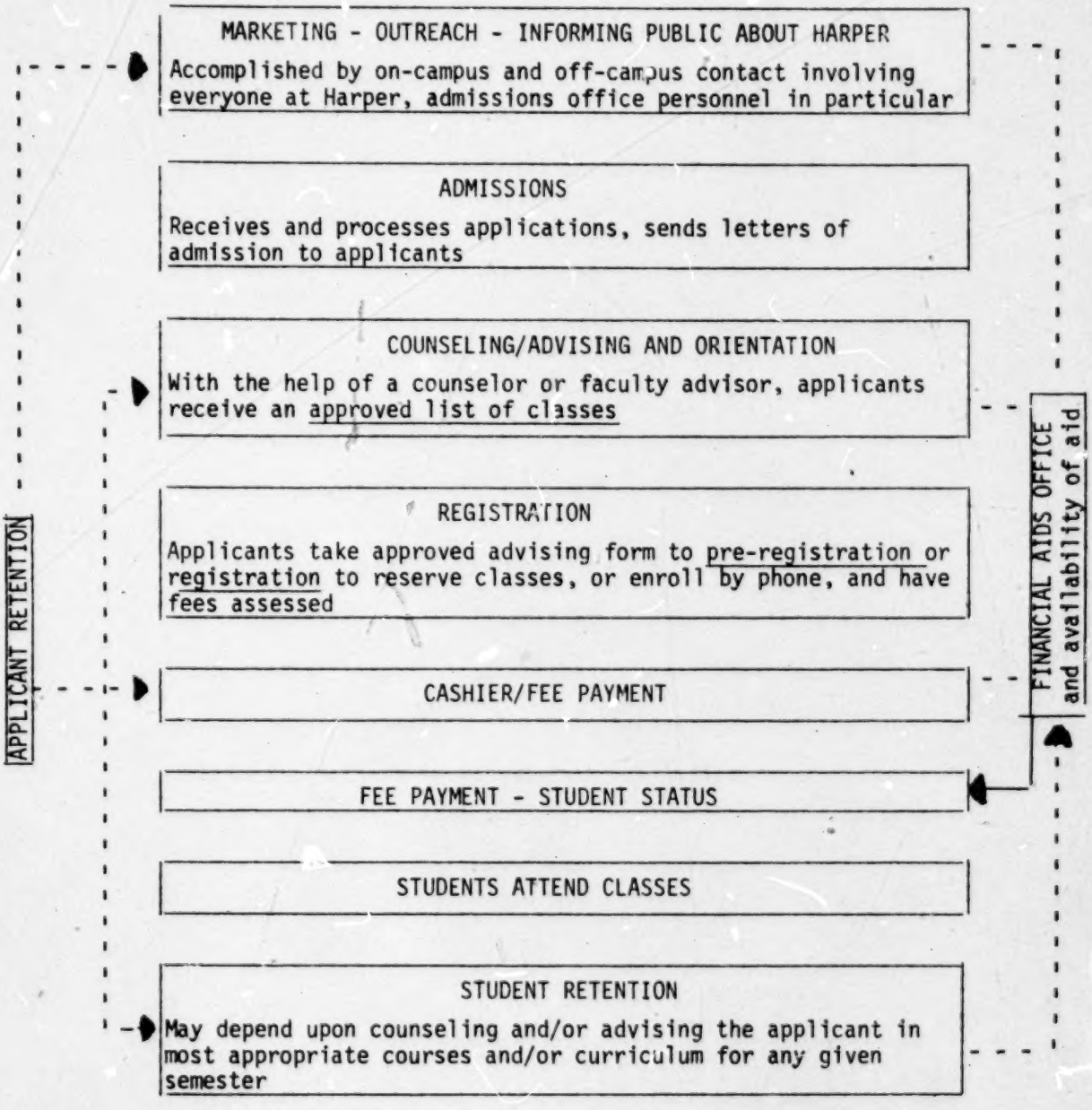
Student services or student affairs should be recognized as the marketing organization of the institution, and be directed to function as a vital link between the community, the student, and the classroom. The new thrust in student development is compatible with the aim of marketing a community college insofar as student development specialists, by virtue of their training and experience, have a major role to play in extending and meeting the educational needs of a very heterogeneous group of people coming through the open doors of our institutions. The need to extend educational opportunities to college service area residents should not be limited to periods of declining enrollment when the sale of classroom space does not provide the productions line, or instruction, with a sufficiently large audience to address, nor sufficient quantities of individuals to pay for the cost of instruction. Marketing should not be viewed or interpreted as a process which is intended to meet institutional needs, but rather as a process by which we can meet the needs of people we are committed to serve. If we concentrate on meeting the needs of service area residents, we may find that we will all meet our enrollment projections.

In conclusion, although some educators may be uncomfortable in borrowing terminology from the business world, the size of the educational enterprise clearly demonstrates that education is big business. In 1976, education involved 29% of the total population, cost approximately $131 billion, and accounted for 8% of the gross national product. It seems imperative that close attention be given to the way in which those responsible for delivery of educational services interface with consumers of those services.

MARKETING

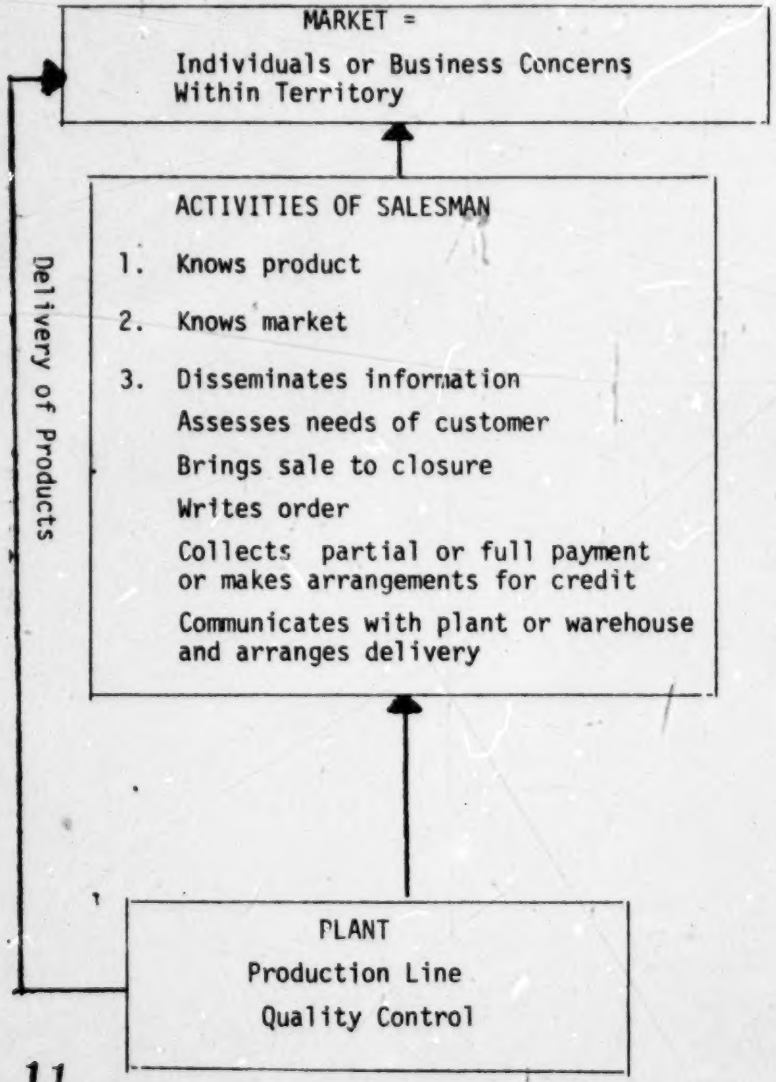
INQUIRY RETENTION

1. AN INCREASE IN INQUIRIES ABOUT THE COLLEGE
2. AN INCREASE OF APPLICATIONS TO THE COLLEGE
3. AN INCREASE OF INDIVIDUALS ADMITTED TO THE COLLEGE


MARKETING - OUTREACH - INFORMING PUBLIC ABOUT HARPER
Accomplished by on-campus and off-campus contact involving everyone at Harper, admissions office personnel in particular
ADMISSIONS
Receives and processes applications, sends letters of admission to applicants
COUNSELING/ADVISING AND ORIENTATION
With the help of a counselor or faculty advisor, applicants receive an approved list of classes
REGISTRATION
Applicants take approved advising form to pre-registration or registration to reserve classes, or enroll by phone, and have fees assessed
CASHIER/FEE PAYMENT
FEE PAYMENT - STUDENT STATUS
STUDENTS ATTEND CLASSES
STUDENT RETENTION
May depend upon counseling and/or advising the applicant in most appropriate courses and/or curriculum for any given semester
APPLICANT RETENTION
FINANCIAL AIDS OFFICE and availability of aid

ROLES PLAYED BY SALESMAN AND RECRUITER IN MARKETING PROCESS

MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE - SALES ACTIVITY



COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE - RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY